

A PUBLICATION
OF THE
AAIDD
STUDENT AND
EARLY CAREER
PROFESSIONAL
SPECIAL
INTEREST
GROUP
(SECP SIG)

AAIDD Student and Early Career Professional Newsletter

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Here is the Latest Issue of the AAIDD Student and Early Career Professional Newsletter!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

SECP SIG Election Results	1
The Non-Academic Job Search	2-3
Webinar: Emergency	4-5
The Best Advice Ever	6
Save the Date: March Webinar	7
Like SECP SIG on Facebook	7
Meet Our New Board Liaison	8-9
Connect with AAIDD Online	9
Supports During Natural Disasters	10-11
Webinar: DSPs	12
Publication Information	13
Join AAIDD	13

This newsletter focuses on connecting and sharing information with students, young professionals, and their mentors in the field of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD). We hope you find this newsletter to be a useful resource. We invite you to get involved in the many

activities of the SECP SIG.

If you are interested in joining our SIG on Students and Early Career Professionals, you may sign up online when you join or renew your membership in AAIDD, or you may contact Jason Epstein jepstein@aaidd.org for more information. We look forward to hearing from you!

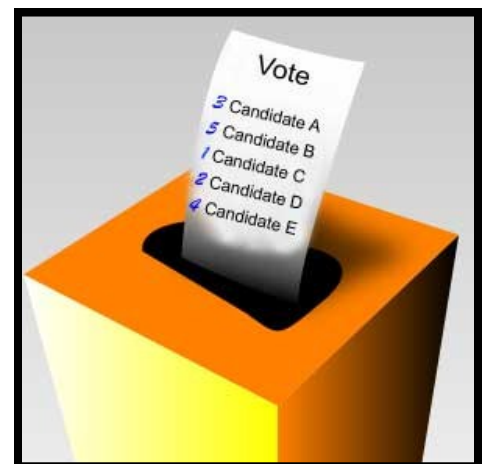


The votes have been tallied!

Thank you to everyone who participated in the very first AAIDD Student and Early Career Professional (SECP) Special Interest Group (SIG) elections! The newly elected officers will begin their positions on July 1st, 2013. Please join us in congratulating these five outstanding students and early career professionals.

- **Co-Chairs: Kelly Bohlander and Sarah Hall**

- **Secretary: Kim Fisher**
- **Doctoral Student Representatives: Haleigh Scott & Patricia Scisione**



Leaving the Academy? Tips on the Non-Academic Job Search

By Jackie Arteglier

The job application process can be a source of tremendous anxiety, particularly for students and early career professionals who are searching for a full-time position in their desired field for the first time. As an early career professional who has been both the applicant and the interviewer, I hope to share with you some strategies for successfully landing that first (or second, or third...) job.

Set Yourself Up: Although it is imperative to give priority and focus to one's coursework, the value of "extracurricular activities" cannot be overstated. Where are you volunteering, interning, or working part-time? Are these organizations that could become future employers or valuable references? Even if only for a few hours a week, spending time in an agency within your area of interest can help define your future career path.

**Insider Tip:* Your university's career services department should have databases of agencies seeking volunteers, interns, and part-time employees. Make an appointment or attend their fair; alumni can also find many of these resources online.

Network: Peers, professors, and supervisors will often become lifelong resources, especially if you foster and maintain these relationships. The Internet has made doing this tremendously easy; consider joining (or updating your profile) on LinkedIn,

MeetUp, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Tumblr, and professional websites (just remember to be mindful of each site's privacy limitations). Also remember, face-to-face networking can be equally (if not more) valuable. Consider inviting a former supervisor to coffee to ask for a reference, attend your professional organization's annual conference, or stop by your alma mater during a trusted professor's drop-in hours to discuss major career decisions.

**Insider Tip:* Always remember to share! I subscribe to a variety of professional e-newsletters. When I see something that might interest a former colleague, I pass it along. It enables relationships to be maintained in a meaningful way.

Expand Your Search: The field of ID/DD is incredibly diverse and broad, and it is because of this that there are a tremendous number of career opportunities available. When looking for a job within this field, it is always advised to look to nonprofits, schools, and government agencies. However, you might also want to consider law firms, hospitals, nursing homes, and universities/colleges (for non-teaching positions).

**Insider Tip:* Websites like CareerBuilder.com and Monster.com allow you to set and save customized searches. You can then receive regular (usually

(Continued on page 3)

The Non-Academic Job Search, cont'd

weekly) email updates listing all available jobs matching your search terms.

Research, Resume, Review, Repeat: Your cover letter and resume are often your first (and sometimes your only) opportunity to set yourself apart. Consider keeping a “master” resume on file that you update regularly with every new job, award, skill, etc. When applying for a job, review the job description carefully and research the organization. Then, cull through your master resume to find those items that are directly applicable to the job so as to create a concise, individualized resume. Cover letters should be equally as specific; use the cover letter to highlight a specific skill set or training that directly relates to the position you are applying for. And most importantly, read and re-read your resume then have someone else review it too.

**Insider Tip:* Read the job description closely. Identify keywords that are highlighted or used repeatedly. When possible and appropriate, incorporate these words into your cover letter and resume.

Be Prepared: Prior to any interview, review the agency’s website or trade materials, if available. Get to know their administrative team, the structure of their organization, and their mission/vision statement. With this information readily available, the interviewer will expect that you have done your homework. It is also helpful to prepare for questions that you might be asked. For a list of common

interview questions, ask your career services department, discuss with colleagues (preferably those currently interviewing), and search the Internet.

And lastly, consider bringing an extra resume, contact information for all references, identification, diplomas/certificates, and a notepad/pen to the interview.

**Insider Tip:* Ask colleagues for additional information about the organization. Even if they have not worked for the agency, they may have had some interactions with the agency and/or know someone who has. Their insights will help you better understand the traits the agency seeks in an employee and also determine if it is the right agency for you.

Don’t Forget the Follow-Up: At every stage of the application process, set a reminder for yourself to follow-up. After submitting a resume, call a day or two later to ensure it was received. After the interview, send a thank you note to highlight your interest in the position and clarify any key points you made (or wished you made) during the interview. And after the decision is made – even if it was not in your favor, send a note of thanks requesting future consideration.

**Insider Tip:* When I was in a position to hire staff, I received only two hand-written thank you letters. And I still distinctly remember each note. Consider writing a note, because even if you are not selected for the position you might just be the first person thought of next time there is an opening.

Webinar: Emergency Preparedness - What Does that Mean for People With I/DD, their Families, and their Communities?

By Kim Fisher

Recent weather related disasters, including Super Storm Sandy, have increased the public's awareness of the need to create and practice effective emergency preparedness plans. With this in mind, the Student and Early Career Professional SIG wondered how individuals with disabilities fit into this planning. In January, we partnered with AUCD to host a webinar titled "*Emergency Preparedness - What Does that Mean for People with I/DD, their Families, and their Communities?*" to answer this very question. Webinar speakers Ms. Marcie Roth, of FEMA's Office of Disability Integration and Coordination, and Ms. Brianna "Dawn" Skaags and Ms. Shavanna Mahoe, of University of Hawai'i at Manoe Center for Disability Studies and the Feeling Safe Being Safe Program, had specific recommendations on how self-advocates and first responders can and should work together to create emergency preparedness plans.

Ms. Roth's presentation focused on FEMA's work with individuals with

disabilities, families, and communities in transforming perspectives so that individuals with disabilities are considered an asset rather than a liability in emergency situations. FEMA works closely with communities to ensure all members maintain active involvement in emergency plans, exercises, and recovery activities. Particularly, FEMA trains first responders on ensuring individuals with disabilities stay connected to their supports in times of disaster and recovery (e.g., assistive technology, service animals, and person assistant network). Ms. Roth described the need to develop partnerships between local authorities, first responders, and community members. The overall message: "people with disabilities need to be at the table" when emergency preparedness plans are created, practiced, and implemented.

Ms. Roth also discussed FEMA employment opportunities opening soon. Both the FEMA Corps and FEMA Reservist programs will be hiring in locations across the

(Continued on page 5)

Webinar: Emergency Preparedness, cont'd

country. Individuals with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply. For more information, check out FEMA's website, www.fema.gov.

Ms. Skaags and Ms. Mahoe shared Hawai'i's implementation of a emergency preparedness community partnership program. Hawai'i's geographic isolation, culturally diverse communities, and inclusive living (most individuals with disabilities live in their communities and not in large institutions) presented civic leaders with a pressing need to reach out and involve individuals with disabilities in local emergency preparedness plans. After surveying individuals' with disabilities perspectives on emergency preparedness, Ms. Skaags and her team at the University of Hawai'i's Center for Disability Studies found that many individuals with disabilities were not prepared or did not feel qualified to prepare for emergencies. This was the driving force behind Hawai'i's implementation of the *Feeling Safe Being Safe* (FSBS) training program.

Created by the Consumer Advisory Council in California, FSBS was "designed by

individuals with disabilities, for individuals with disabilities", and is a "person-centered, person-directed" emergency preparedness training program. Ms. Mahoe, a certified host trainer, described the four-part plan (i.e., worksheet, magnet, emergency kit, and plan to meet your neighbors) and how host trainers train others with disabilities in their community to be prepared. FSBS trainers also work closely with first responders and local municipal authorities. They have shared their work at national conferences and through a website that provides tips for first responders when working with individuals with disabilities (www.cds.hawaii.edu/tips/autism/). This resource will soon be made available as an app.

Check out this very informative webinar at http://aaidd.org/content_9982.cfm.



The Best Piece of Advice I Ever Received...

By Kelly Bohlander

At the beginning of a new year, people often make resolutions to improve both their personal and professional lives. I've asked some of the most influential leaders in the field to share some of the most valuable advice they've ever received. Whether your resolution involves completing your dissertation, applying for your first professional position or simply looking to improve in your current job, contemplate these pieces of career advice as you set your new career resolutions for 2013.

"Write each report, document, article or paper in a clear concise manner that anyone walking by my desk could pick up and read and understand. This seems pretty simple and straightforward, but in practice has been pretty difficult."

-**Charles R. Moseley**, Ed.D, Associate Executive Director, NASDDDS

"1) If you want to know what an organization's real priorities are, follow the money; 2) Always try to be helpful, even if there is no immediate or even possible payoff for you; 3) Never make any major life decisions on a really bad day, or a really good day."

- **Steven M. Eidelman**, H. Rodney Sharp Professor of Human Services Policy and Leadership

"The best advice I received was to be nice to everyone you encounter in your work. This is a small field. The person you supervise today may be the chair of your board in a few years. Paths cross and re-cross. Little gestures mean a lot. Write down people's birthdays and the names of their spouses and kids. You will never make a mistake by treating everyone with respect, humor and personal interest."

- **Nancy Weiss**, Co-Founder and Co-Director, National Leadership Consortium on Developmental Disabilities at University of Delaware

Actually, I love quotes from others:

"Wrinkles should merely indicate where smiles have been." Mark Twain

"A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty." Sir Winston Churchill

"A vocabulary of truth and simplicity will be of service throughout your life." Sir Winston Churchill"

- **Elizabeth A. Perkins**, Ph.D., RNMH., Research Assistant Professor/Health Coordinator, Florida Center for Inclusive Communities



**Save the Date:
AAIDD/ANCOR Joint Webinar**

**Transitioning With Technology:
Using Handheld Technology When Moving from School to Work and
Community**

Presented by Marsha Threlkeld

March 11, 2013 3:00pm – 4:00pm EST

Students should have ready and easy access to their resumes, career portfolios, videos of work experience, task sequencing and scheduling methods, communication, and more. Learn what handheld devices and apps are being utilized to assist students as they successfully move from school to work and community. Emphasis will be on built in features, and generic and specialized apps which promote independence, communication, productivity, and inclusion. Hear what Leaving School With 21st Century Technology projects are accomplishing and how Learning Cohorts are teaching each other and spreading the word. Marsha will share stories of how school programs and the employment agencies they interact with, are interfacing and providing seamless serve delivery, using handheld devices to leverage preferred employment outcomes, independent living, and community connection.

To register go to: <https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/616660466>



We invite you to check out (and like!) our new Facebook page - [AAIDD Student and Early Career Professionals SIG](#). This will be a place where we can post notifications about tasks to be done, provide information about upcoming conferences and job opportunities, and just network.

Meet Our New Board Liaison - Dr. Liz Perkins!

By Kelly Bohlander

The SECP SIG is excited to welcome Dr. Liz Perkins as our new Board Liaison. Dr. Perkins is a Research Assistant Professor and Health Coordinator at the Florida Center for Inclusive Communities (FCIC), USF's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities. She holds a PhD in Aging Studies and a BA (summa cum laude) in Psychology, both from The University of South Florida.

Dr. Perkins began her career working as a nursing assistant in a residential home for older adults in the United Kingdom. Her experience at the residential home led her to apply for Registered General Nurse training. During the interview process, Dr. Perkins had it made clear to her that being a congenital amputee did not make her a welcomed student, "I was not treated very well". Dr. Perkins reports that it was a humbling but invaluable experience to be on the receiving end of such stigma.

After receiving the denial letter, Dr. Perkins saw an advertisement for Registered Nurse Mental Handicap (RNMH) training at the School of Nursing, at Lea Castle Hospital in Kidderminster, England. Now known as "Learning Disabilities" in the UK, an RNLD is a nurse who trains specifically in the care of individuals with IDD. Dr. Perkins was granted a two week trial and after the first week was recommended to be allowed to train!

Dr. Perkins spent many successful years as a



nurse in various clinical/administrative roles, and predominantly working with older adults, before moving to Florida to pursue a career in academia. Dr. Perkins' current work at the Florida Center for Inclusive Communities is concentrated on improving both access to and quality of healthcare for persons with disabilities. One of the accomplishments Dr. Perkins has achieved in her new role is authoring *My Health Passport*, a popular health advocacy document designed to assist health professionals to be sensitive to the needs of patients with IDD when they visit hospitals or clinics.

Last year Dr. Perkins was elected for a four-year term as a Member-at-Large for the AAIDD Board of Directors. She had previously served as the

(Continued on page 9)

Spotlight on Dr. Liz Perkins, cont'd

President of the Gerontology Division at AAIDD. She recently served as Guest Editor (with Dr. Sandy Friedman) of a special issue on Aging and End-of-Life for AAIDD's American Journal on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Dr. Perkins hopes that her continued involvement in leadership roles at AAIDD will inspire and motivate others in the field. Dr. Perkins stated, "It's a small field so there is a need to attract and retain people, especially those working in clinical and direct support. We need to get good folks, keep those folks, and have the best possible work force we can have."

Dr. Perkins is very proud of her association

with AAIDD and encourages student and early career professionals to always be open to opportunities and get involved! AAIDD provides numerous ways for professionals to network, an activity Dr. Perkins believes is vital.

"I know exactly what it is like to be stigmatized, marginalized, and to have lowered expectations because I'm a little different." To reduce stigma, we must "make the unfamiliar become familiar", Dr. Perkins has stated. There is every reason to believe that with Dr. Perkins' leadership, this challenge will become a reality.

Connect with AAIDD online!



- [Check out AAIDD on LinkedIn!](#) LinkedIn has the world's largest professional network on the internet with 161 million members. Joining our LinkedIn group is a great way to connect with professionals in the field you may not come into contact with otherwise.



- [Check out AAIDD on YouTube!](#) You will find a wide variety of videos on topics ranging from the justice system and intellectual disability to special education best practices to classification and intellectual disability.



- [Check out AAIDD on Twitter!](#) Twitter is a great way to stay connected to AAIDD. We regularly post information about upcoming events and publications in addition to keeping you updated on the latest in national disability news.



- [Check out AAIDD on Pinterest!](#) One of the newer social media platforms, Pinterest provides a space for users to organize and share images. We are continually building up content on our pinboards so you can share our images with others and spread the word about AAIDD news, events, and resources.



- [Like us on Facebook](#) to connect with AAIDD and network with other disability professionals.

Supporting People through Natural Disaster Events like Hurricane Sandy

By Melissa DiSipio

Even though it's been over 10 years since I worked at a residential provider agency, I still cringe at the first warning of snow or an impending storm. It brings me back to a time when the pager (yes, remember when we used 'beepers') would ring non-stop with staff call-outs and emergency preparations. I particularly remember one winter in which I kept a backpack of personal items in the trunk of my car in case I got stranded or had to stay at one of the community group homes to help fulfill adequate coverage and relieve my staff.

The most recent events of Hurricane Sandy hit close to home for me living in Southeast Pennsylvania and a 5 minute bridge ride across to New Jersey. Besides thinking about family and friends that have homes along the Jersey Shore, I thought about those agencies struggling to move, find shelter and care for people with I/DD during the storm. I vividly remember a presentation by Sharon Gomez during AAIDD's Alliance for Full Participation Summit held in Washington D.C. after Hurricane Katrina. I was mesmerized by her detailed account of moving people during the storm and having to set up space for them in a shelter. I had never really thought about what it would be like supporting people through such a catastro-

phe. Sharon provided great recommendations concerning impending emergencies from preparing the required amount of medications to packing a few, key personal items that would bring someone solace during such a time. A provider agency nurse gave testimony about setting up a separate area in the shelter for those people who were very upset about the whole situation.

By the time Hurricane Sandy came along, many agencies, staff and caregivers were already well-versed in Emergency Preparedness, including the Philadelphia area. The Department of Health has even developed a department to support and recognize people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) as a vulnerable population. They include I/DD as a target population in all community outreach efforts to educate and alert the media and will begin training First Responders in the region.

KenCrest, an agency that supports people living along the east coast with homes in Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Connecticut had to move and relocate people and staff from 27 homes, affecting a total of about 90 individuals plus their accompanying caregivers due to Hurricane Sandy. The agency's smooth transition and swift move back home

(Continued on page 11)

Natural Disasters, cont'd

2 days after the storm is due in large part to their consistent attention to detail and extreme preparation. Everyone knew what their job should be before, during, and after the storm to support folks and keep them safe and healthy through the hurricane.

Some of the things that worked well for KenCrest during Hurricane Sandy were:

- Making advanced or quick hotel arrangements
- Sending out reminders and preparatory information out early
- Early communication regarding driving and transportation
- Essential staff were identified, ready, and did whatever was needed to be done
- Communication through phone, website, and facebook
- Good communication with first responders

Some of the issues or challenges that were not anticipated were:

- Hotels were full or had prior reservations
- Lack of public transportation
- Cell phones not having service
- Problems with generators
- Road closures
- The number of sites effected and length of time

Some things that KenCrest learned through this experience:

- Need to identify staff's positions as essential staff and appoint people for each area
- Need to have alternate plans around road closures and lack of transportation
- Plan for when cell service is not working, use of short range, satellite phones and laptops
- Facebook was considered useful in communication even though it was not part of the plan
- Develop an evacuation checklist
- Develop a comprehensive communication plan that is tested yearly

As you can see from this list (which is only a sample), KenCrest clearly prepared and reviewed their disaster plan which enabled them to recover so quickly from Hurricane Sandy. Some agencies and locations were not so lucky. Please remember to prepare for such an emergency by using some of these recommendations to keep people with I/DD safe and healthy during a natural disaster.

A special thank you to Sharon Gomez and Jim McFalls (both current FAAIDD members) for granting permission to share this information.

Webinar: The Importance of Direct Support Professionals

By Colleen McLaughlin

On September 7th AAIDD and ANCOR collaborated on a webinar, titled *Direct Support Professionals (DSP): Perspectives and Innovations from the Field*, aimed at kicking off DSP Recognition Month with presentations from experts in the field of direct support and workforce development. Lori Sedlezky, the director of knowledge translation at the Research and Training Center on Community Living, Institute on Community Integration at the University of Minnesota, provided a detailed and thought-provoking presentation on the current state of the direct support workforce nationally and shared information on best practices in workforce development. The information she provided emphasized the critical need to address the impending DSP workforce crisis. Ms. Sedlezky also provided useful information on effective recruitment and retention strategies including realistic job previews and competency-based training strategies.

The DSP perspective on the role DSPs play in the lives of people with disabilities and what provider organizations can do to support the development of these important employees was provided by Lynda DiPressi of New Horizons Resources, Inc. in Pleasant Valley, New York. Lynda was the 2012 recipient of ANCOR's Direct Support Professional of the Year Award and is a credentialed DSP through

the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals. Her presentation emphasized the support provided to her and her colleagues by her organization through having open lines of communication across all staff and effective and sustainable training and competency development practices.

Lynn Rivas, Ph.D., the co-executive director of the Consumer Directed Services Network, a California-based organization dedicated to training and empowering workers and supporting the rights of people with developmental disabilities, wrapped up the webinar by sharing the innovative and collaborative strategies used in California to improved the DSP workforce. She shared insight gleaned from a Moving Mountains award winning collaborative project between The East Bay Innovations, SEIU Labor, and Management Training and Career Ladder Development Committee. In her presentation she shared information about competency-based career pathways and the importance of partnerships.

This archived webinar can be found by going to: http://aaid.org/content_9560.cfm





Knowledge | Support | Empowerment

A Publication of the AAIDD Student and Early Career Professional SIG

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Kelly Bohlander, *Best Advice & Perkins Spotlight*
Melissa DiSipio, *Natural Disasters*
Colleen McLaughlin, *DSP Webinar*

Archived issues of SECPC Newsletter available at :
http://www.aaid.org/content_366.cfm?navID=115

About SECP SIG

The goal of the AAIDD Student and Early Career Professionals Special Interest Group (SECP SIG) is to develop and implement strategies that foster the involvement and representation of students, recent graduates, and professionals in the early stages of their careers within AAIDD. The SIG has a number of initiatives and meets via teleconference once per month to provide updates on committee initiatives and to share ideas. We are always interested in including more students and new members in our activities. Please contact Melissa DiSipio at MDiSipio@pmhcc.org or Judith Gross at jgross@ku.edu if you would like to learn more about becoming involved in this active committee.

Please visit our website at:
http://www.aaid.org/content_297.cfm?navID=86

Not yet an AAIDD member.... Join Today!

AAIDD offers a number of membership options with a variety of benefits depending on the level you choose. Below we will highlight three types of membership that may be affordable for students and early career professionals

AAIDD offers an **International Electronic membership** for members residing outside of the U.S. or Canada for \$50, which offers electronic access to both **AJIDD and IDD** journals. Members at this level cannot hold office or vote in AAIDD

elections.

AAIDD offers a **Basic** membership for \$75, which offers electronic access to **AJIDD or IDD** journals. Basic members are eligible to hold office and vote in AAIDD elections.

AAIDD also offers a **Classic** membership for \$125, which offers electronic access to both **AJIDD and IDD** journals. Classic members are eligible to hold office and vote in AAIDD elections.

In addition to the aforementioned benefits, members at all three levels have access to members-only web forums, delivery of electronic newsletters, and are entitled to member discounts for meeting registration, book store purchases, and job postings.

For more information on the various membership categories and to join AAIDD visit :
http://www.aaid.org/content_120.cfm

